



**King County**

**Rod Dembowski**

Councilmember, District 1

**Metropolitan King County Council**

Dear Neighbor,

I recently completed my first year serving you on the King County Council. I am fairly new to public service, having spent the last 14 years in the private sector, prior to serving on the Council. Fully aware of the frustrations that some citizens have with government, I came into office working every day to bring a pragmatic and common sense approach to how the county serves our community.

I've prioritized watching taxpayer dollars, while finding ways to responsibly fund Metro Transit, and our human service needs. I am also deeply committed to protecting our environment, and making sure King County continues to be a safe and vibrant region to live, work, and play. Reflecting back on this year, I am proud work we've done together, and I am looking forward to the work to come.

Keeping you informed and soliciting your ideas and suggestions is very important to me. This Annual Report to Constituents is part of that process. I hope you enjoy this report on the work we've accomplished together so far. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns at (206) 477-1001 or at [rod.dembowski@kingcounty.gov](mailto:rod.dembowski@kingcounty.gov).

Very Truly Yours,

Rod Dembowski  
King County Councilmember



# Annual Report

A summary of Councilmember Dembowski's first year accomplishments



Councilmember Rod Dembowski

# Introduction

This Report to Constituents provides information on Rod's work on the King County Council during the first year in office as well as his priorities and accomplishments, including his community outreach efforts.

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## Priorities and Accomplishments

Rod lightheartedly refers to King County as a “hidden government,” because people are often unclear about the role, function, and jurisdiction of King County. In reality, the County has significant responsibilities and far reaching impacts on the day-to-day lives of everyone who lives in, works in, or visits King County. King County is the region’s government. As such, it oversees:

- Metro Transit
- Records, elections and voter registration
- Tax assessments, billing, collection, and distribution
- Superior and District Courts
- Adult Detention and the Juvenile Court and Detention Center
- Solid waste disposal
- Emergency services, including flood and river control
- Mental Health Services
- Regional Parks
- Water quality and sewer

### Work on the King County Council

In 2013, no member of the King County Council served on more committees than Councilmember Rod Dembowski and Rod did not miss a single vote in those committees, having voted 625 consecutive times.

In 2013 Rod’s committee assignments included:

- Regional Transit Committee, Chair
- Transportation, Economy and Environment
- Law, Justice, Health and Human Services
- Government Accountability and Oversight
- Committee of the Whole
- Regional Water Quality
- King County Ferry District, Executive Committee

In 2014 Rod’s committee assignments include:

- Transportation, Economy and Environment , Chair
- Law, Justice, Health and Human Services, Vice-Chair
- Budget and Fiscal Management
- Government Accountability and Oversight
- Committee of the Whole
- King County Ferry District, Executive Committee

As Chair the Transportation, Economy, and Environment Committee, Rod will help take on the tremendous challenge King County faces in finding a solution to the looming Metro Transit and county roads budget shortfalls. Rod will also help lead the council’s work on economic development, pay equity and income disparity, affordable housing, and protecting our environment. These are all critical to King County’s quality of life and continued climb out of the Great Recession.

Rod also serves on a variety of outside committees including: the Board of Health, Growth Management and Planning Council, Seashore Transportation Forum, Northshore Parks and Recreation Service Area, Mental Illness and Drug Dependency Oversight Board, and the King County Airport Strategic Plan Advisory Group.



Rod being sworn-in for his full 4 year term in December 2013.



Rod being sworn-in in March of 2013 to serve the remainder of Bob Ferguson's term on the Council.

## Health and Human Services

Unfortunately, during an economic downturn, human services are often the first to be cut, and King County has been no exception. An annual general fund budget of once over \$26 million dollars has been cut to under \$2 million in recent years. For this reason, Councilmember Dembowski's top priorities in office are reforming our health and human services programs, and increasing funding for human services for the smartest investments possible. So far Rod has:

- Authored an ordinance calling for the creation of a King County Youth Action Plan. (More information below )
- Inserted proviso language in the 2014 budget requiring the County Executive examine and recommend improvements to our current outreach strategies, translation services, and practices for providing information to Limited English Proficient populations including an analysis of options for providing voting materials in additional language not currently required under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act.
- Secured funding for a dedicated staff position to support King County's Commercially Sexually Exploited Children Task Force.
- Secured \$10,000 for the Shoreline Veterans Association to kick off their fundraising campaign for the new Shoreline Veterans Memorial and \$15,000 for North Helpline and the Woodinville Food banks to respond to families in need.
- Added language to the County's State Legislative agenda urging state legislators support efforts to meet the demand for a wide range of needed human services, including fighting for the restoration of \$7.4 million in cuts to King County mental health and substance abuse programs.
- Authored a letter to the state legislature, urging them to stop the draconian cuts to mental health funding, as proposed in the State Senate budget, which was signed by the County Executive and all Councilmembers.
- Authored a letter to the state legislature, urging against cuts for health and human services.
- Voted to place the Emergency Medical Services Levy on the November 2013 ballot ensuring residents of the County would continue to benefit from the best EMS system in the country.
- Authored an amendment to the King County Transformation Panel, which acknowledges the funding crisis of health and human services and declining unrestricted general fund resource.
- Donated retired Metro vanpool vans to Northwest's Child, SHAG of North King County, and the Renway Boys and Girls Club.



Rod on a tour of HealthPoint Clinic in Bothell.



Learning about the new Kinderling in District 1.



Meeting with the Raikes Foundation.



Councilmember Larry Gossett and Rod donating a "retired" van to the Renway Boys and Girls Club .

## In the Spotlight: The Youth Action Plan

On Monday January 21st, the Metropolitan King County Council gave its unanimous approval to legislation authored by Councilmember Dembowski, that sets priorities for King County's next generation by ensuring that young people in King County have access to the resources and opportunities they need to become healthy, productive adults. The legislation adopted by the Council at its January 21 meeting calls for the development of a Youth Action Plan to create a holistic approach to delivering the needed resources to young people throughout King County.

Over the last 50 years, King County has been a leader in supporting programs for children, youth and young adults – including developing sports fields in local neighborhoods, providing public health visits for low-income infants and children, establishing a Youth & Family Services Network to help at-risk teens and families, and assisting youth who have become involved with the criminal justice system to take a fresh path. However, the Great Recession reduced or eliminated County support for many programs, and the programs still receiving county funding are operated through many different agencies, too often with little coordination between them

The adopted legislation calls for the creation of a broadly-based task force to develop a Youth Action Plan that would include the following elements:

- Whether a single point of accountability should be established to lead the County's children and youth services, programs and policies, and if so, it's form, role and duties
- Mission, vision, and defined outcomes that enable the County to advance its Strategic Plan and social justice and equity goals as they relate to youth  
A Bill of Rights for Youth
- Identification of reform efforts and efficiencies, gaps, opportunities to take programs to scale, and recommendations to overcoming barriers to success
- Prioritization of programs and methodologies and recommendations related to funding  
Evaluation and reporting structure and implementation timeline

The proposal calls on the County Executive to appoint members to a Youth Action Plan Task Force. The members of the task force include elected officials, leaders from Seattle and suburban cities, and non-profit community partners that serve infants, children, youth and young adults. It is charged with conducting information meetings with community members, stakeholders and consumers to keep interested parties informed on the development of the Plan.



Panel hearing for the Youth Action Plan.



Meeting with students at UW Bothell.



Meeting with youth at Shoreline Community College.

## Transportation and RTC 2013 Review

In his first year on the Council, Rod served as Chair of the Regional Transit Committee ("RTC"), which reviews and makes recommendations to the King County Council on countywide policies for public transportation services. As a regional body, the Regional Transit Committee is comprised of County Councilmembers, Seattle City Councilmembers, and mayors and councilmembers from cities throughout King County. This broad membership ensures that King County and its regional partners have a forum to collaborate and develop policy guidance for Metro.

The major policy undertaking for the committee is Metro Transit's Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2011-2021, which calls for updates every two years. This was the first year the Strategic Plan was updated.

The Strategic Plan is the policy blueprint for Metro Transit (the state's largest transit agency). Updates to the plan are a delicate balancing act, ensuring that the interests of communities from throughout the region are considered. As chair, it is Rod's responsibility to strike that balance.

Over a several month process the committee successfully collaborated with staff and constituents to make sure everyone's voice was heard and that the updates to the Strategic Plan met as many needs as possible. In the end, the 13-member committee unanimously voted for all updates to the Strategic Plan.

Other transportation accomplishments:

- Authored the legislation creating a Transportation Benefit District, to prevent cuts to Metro Transit.
- Joined the Keep King County Moving Now coalition and lobbied Olympia advocating for a state transportation package.
- Joined by his fellow Regional Transit Committee members, Rod authored a letter to Governor Inslee, urging him to include local funding options for transit and roads in a statewide transportation package.
- Co-sponsored the first ever King County low-income transit fare.
- Wrote legislation requiring an update for Metro's park and rides and other access to transit infrastructure.
- Worked with Metro to ensure successful implementation of Rapid Ride E-Line, from Shoreline to downtown Seattle
- Working with Sound Transit and community groups on light rail planning from the University District through Lynnwood.



CM Gossett, CM McDermott, and Rod after a press conference on Metro Transit.



The July 17th meeting of the RTC was held at Shoreline Community College. In this picture, Metro Transit General Manager Kevin Desmond is giving his latest update to committee members.



Rod touring Metro Transit.



Rod and regional leaders, advocating for a state-wide Transportation Package in Olympia.

## Veterans

As the son of a Korean War Veteran, supporting the men and women who have served this county is very important to Rod. Along with Councilmember Pete von Reichbauer, Rod led a recognition commemorating the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Korean War Armistice at the July 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the King County Council. Dozens of veterans and Korean American Community leaders took part in the commemoration. Young Wan Song, Consul General of the Republic of Korean in Seattle, took part in the ceremony and presented Ambassador of Peace Medals to several Korean War Veterans in attendance. Rod's father Al Dembowski, also received a medal in gratitude for his service.

On Memorial Day Rod honored our veterans by speaking at the Memorial Day ceremonies of Acacia Memorial Park and Evergreen Washelli .

Finally, Rod co-sponsored legislation to ensure pay equity for all King County employees serving in the uniformed services. It is crucial that our service member are treated equally and fairly while they defend our nation.



LTC Corey L. Crosbie, Al Dembowski, and Rod on Memorial Day.



Images from the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Korean War commemoration.



Rods presenting a \$10,000 check to Shoreline Veteran Dwight Stevens, to kick-off the fundraising drive for the Shoreline Veterans Memorial.



Memorial Day Ceremony.

## Protecting our Environment

- Rod is leading the King County and City of Seattle joint effort to clean up the human fecal bacteria that is making Thornton Creek unsafe.
- In the fight against global climate change, Rod voted for a motion expressing deep concerns about the impact of exporting coal to be burned in foreign power plants, and called for a broad review of proposed coal export terminals in Washington State.
- Supported the Green Building Ordinance, which requires that county building projects comply with environmental standards, which will help in the fight in reducing greenhouse gasses.
- Co-authored the Skykomish Initiative to preserve the last unprotected old-growth in King County.
- Amended the County's Federal Legislative Agenda to conserve key lands that would protect important resources including roadless areas, old-growth forest, salmon habitat, trails, river access, and scenic vistas.
- Co-sponsored amendments to the King County Parks Levy, which voters approved with more than 70% of the vote, that:
  - Increase the frequency of the Parks Levy Citizens Oversight Board's report from biennial to annual, making the levy more transparent and responsive to changing needs;
  - Require that in addition to the King County Executive and the King County Council, the report would be delivered to the Regional Policy Committee (RPC). Reporting to the RPC ensures the inclusion of cities throughout the region in the annual reporting process; and
  - Require annual reporting on the progress and maintenance of the system, including reporting on noxious weed control.



Touring the county's last unprotected old-growth forest.



Rod with Finn Hill Neighborhood Alliance Volunteers at the Juanita Woodlands work party.



Rod with Charlie Raines of the Sierra Club, learning about the last unprotected old growth forest in King County.



Rod was a panelist in a meeting of the Thornton Creek Neighborhood Alliance.



Touring Thornton Creek.

## Supporting Fairness and Equity

Rod has demonstrated a commitment to supporting the rights of working men and women and fairness in our economic system.

Since taking office Rod has:

- Passed a socially responsible banking ordinance, requiring socially responsible banking practices as a minimum requirement for financial institutions to be awarded banking contracts with the County.
- Sponsored legislation calling for establishment of a living wage policy for King County employees and County contractors.
- Added language to the County's Federal Legislative Agenda on the County's support for equal and fair pay for all working people, specifically any efforts or actions to reduce gender pay disparity.
- Met and marched with Harborview nurses and medical staff in support of their contract negotiation.
- Escorted striking fast-food employees back to work at 5:00am in the morning.
- Signed a letter in support of worker's rights at Harborview.
- Signed a letter in support of worker's rights of UW Childcare Center workers.

## Law and Justice

- Authored nationally-recognized language in the King County Department of Public Defense Charter amendment to ensure that "access to justice and equity in the criminal justice system" were enshrined as duties of the new department.
- Established a public defense criminal justice reform advisory task force to provide recommendations on options for preserving the national reputation of the county's public defense services.
- Voted for King County Ordinance 2013-0285, which modernizes King County's practice of honoring administrative detainer requests issued by U.S. Immigration and Custom Enforcement, and sponsored amendments including:
  - A "Sunshine Amendment" that requires quarterly reporting on detainer practices, and;
  - Establishing an oversight committee to review the implementation of the new detainer policies and make recommendations on any further recommended changes.
- Sponsored legislation to give our deputies the authority to impound watercraft when making an arrest, or when a vessel cannot be otherwise secured or released to a person who can safely operate the watercraft.



Rod and Harborview flight nurses, supporting their rights.



Rod escorting fast food workers back to work at 5:00 a.m. following their walk-out in support of a living wage.



Rod with members of the *King County Sheriff Marine Unit*.



Rod talking with members of the Sound Alliance regarding ICE Detainer Reform.

## Increasing Transparency and Accountability

- Voted against salary increases for King County managers that Rod believed to be excessive.
- Rod sponsored legislation to make annual precinct alterations available to the public, as it is in the public's interest that voters and political parties have an opportunity to review the proposed adjustments to precinct boundaries before they are transmitted to the council.
- Recognizing that solid waste tonnage has decreased in recent years, Rod sponsored an amendment asking the Solid Waste Division to review the 2006 Solid Waste Transfer & Waste Management Plan and determining whether it is still appropriate for meeting current needs and if savings in the system are possible. This review could save \$100 million or more.
- Advocated for efficiencies within Metro Transit, before raising fares.
- Voted to save tens of millions of dollars on a levy construction project in the Kent Valley by choosing a low-cost plan supported by the local community.
- Moved his office into an existing surplus conference room, that was already fully furnished, to prevent having to buy any new furniture.



Rod and CM von Reichbauer, before a GAO meeting.



Rod learning of efficiencies within Metro.



Rod and Shoreline Councilmembers Roberts and McGlashan, visiting Washington State Representative Ruth Kagi, while advocating for a statewide transportation package.

## Community Outreach

One of the top priorities Councilmember Dembowski has set while in office is to listen and learn from the constituents of District 1. As part of his community outreach plan, Rod has committed to hosting a town hall in every community in District 1, visited every city council, attended numerous meetings, reached out to nearly every neighborhood association, and toured dozens of community organizations and businesses.

### Town Halls

To date, he has hosted town halls in the communities of: Shoreline with Sheriff John Urquhart, North Seattle with Attorney General Bob Ferguson, Kenmore with Mayor David Baker, Woodinville with Mayor Bernie Talmas, Lake Forest Park with Assessor Lloyd Hara, Kirkland with Councilmember Jane Hague, a community coffee in Bothell, and a Korean American Coalition of Washington town hall. Rod has also participated in various transportation forums including an Eastside Transportation forum and Aging and Disability Services Advisory Council transportation forum at the Northshore Senior Center. These meetings have been a great opportunity for Rod to hear directly from the community.



Rod speaking with a group of constituents at his Lake Forest Park Town Hall regarding property taxes.



At the North Seattle Town Hall, Attorney General Ferguson and Rod were honored to be joined by Amy Freedheim, King County's Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for Felony Traffic.

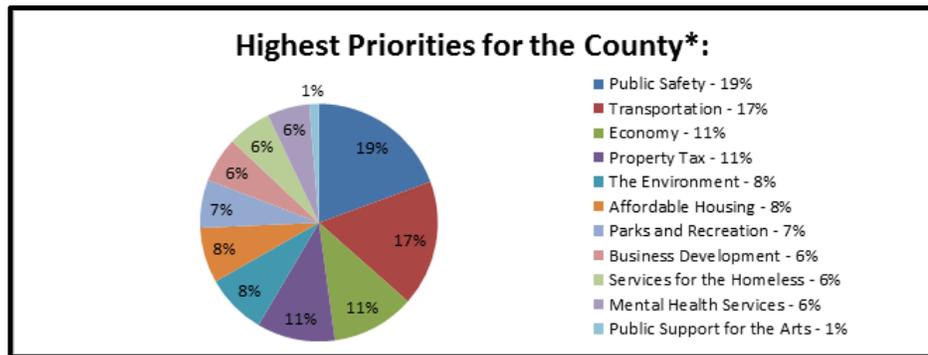


Rod and Councilmember Jane Hague's joint town hall in Kirkland.

## Spring 2013 Constituents' Survey

In May, Rod sent out his first constituents' survey to households in District 1. The survey was sent to more than 60,000 households in the district, and to date more than 2,300 residents have responded.

The results were compiled into an easy to read one page sheet of information.



Above: Resident's responses to question #1 on the survey as well as a picture of Rod with a stack of survey responses!

## Neighborhood Meetings

Another aspect of Rod's community outreach work includes reaching out to neighborhood associations, local service organizations, and various community groups, to discuss their issues of concern.

Here are just a few of the groups and organizations Rod has in his first year in office:

- Kiwanis Club of North Seattle
- Finn Hill Neighborhood Alliance
- Northeast District Neighborhood Council
- Maple Leaf Community Council
- Echo Lake Neighborhood Association
- Richmond Beach Neighborhood Association
- Ridgcrest Neighborhood Association
- Richmond Highlands Neighborhood Association
- Pro-Shoreline
- Kenmore Community Council
- Shoreline Rotary



Rod speaking with constituents in Bothell at a "coffee meeting."

- Shoreline Breakfast Rotary
- Kenmore Uplake Neighborhood Association
- Northshore Rotary
- Woodinville Rotary Club
- Juanita Neighborhood Association
- View Ridge Community Council
- Kirkland Association of Neighborhoods
- Thornton Creek Neighborhood Alliance
- Parkwood Neighborhood Association
- Briarcrest Neighborhood Association
- Sound Alliance



Rod speaking with members of the Parkwood Neighborhood Association.

These meetings have given Rod a better appreciation for both the micro and macro issues that are important to the various neighborhoods of District 1 and King County.

### Note from Rod - I want to hear from you!

It is an honor to represent you on the King County Council. Please call me at 206.477.1001 or email me at [rod.dembowski@kingcounty.gov](mailto:rod.dembowski@kingcounty.gov) and share your thoughts and concerns. We send a regular e-news with updates and information. Call or email us to subscribe. You can also find me on Facebook.

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King County

## Metropolitan King County Council

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January 22, 2014

### **New law prioritizes Children and Youth Council approves creation of Countywide Task Force to propose comprehensive plan for children and youth**

The Metropolitan King County Council gave its unanimous approval to legislation that sets priorities for King County's next generation by ensuring that young people in King County have access to the resources and opportunities they need to become healthy, productive adults. The legislation adopted by the Council at its January 21 meeting calls for the development of a Youth Action Plan to create a holistic approach to delivering the needed resources to young people throughout King County.

"As a kid growing up in Renton, King County played an important role in my life. I played in our county parks, and received health care at our Public Health clinics. Today's kids deserve our best efforts to ensure that they have every opportunity to grow up healthy, safe, and succeed in life," said Councilmember Rod Dembowski, the prime sponsor of the ordinance. "This legislation brings together the broad spectrum of participants from throughout the region who help King County's children and youth to recommit our collective efforts and honor our obligations as adults to the next generation. I look forward to working with these leaders to reform, renew and reinvest in our work to help King County's kids achieve their full potential."

"Ensuring young people in King County have access to services like public transportation, public health, parks, and a social safety net can make a big difference in helping them reach their full potential in life," said Council Chair Larry Phillips. "The Youth Action Plan will help improve access to these services, benefitting youth, families, and our community."

"The Youth Action Plan ensures that coordination of youth services is maximized among all of our partner organizations," said Council Vice Chair Jane Hague. "I welcome the depth of representation of the stakeholders and see an opportunity to have young people be part of task force as well."

"Through our transformation of the health and human services system, we will stay focused on what works for kids," said King County Executive Dow Constantine. "I applaud the Council for passing this legislation and look forward to working to ensure the health and well-being of King County's children, youth and young adults."

Over the last 50 years, King County has been a leader in supporting programs for children, youth and young adults – including developing sports fields in local neighborhoods, providing public health visits for low-income infants and children, establishing a Youth & Family Services Network to help at-risk teens and families, and assisting youth who have become involved with the criminal justice system to take a fresh path. However, the Great Recession reduced or eliminated County support for many programs, and the

programs still receiving county funding are operated through many different agencies, too often with little coordination between them.

As part of an initiative adopted by the Council in 2012, a countywide task force has worked to develop a plan for a collaborative, accountable, and integrated delivery of social safety net services in King County. The Youth Action Plan builds on that work.

"I appreciate all the good work that has gone into developing this plan to benefit the youth of King County," said Councilmember Reagan Dunn. "I look forward to reviewing the recommendations that are produced by this task force and supporting their efforts."

"It is critical to invest in our youth to strengthen the foundation for the future of our communities," said Councilmember Dave Upthegrove. "I am excited about the opportunity to coalesce and coordinate with our richly diverse set of South King County community partners to explore, plan and implement the best solutions to invest in our youth."

The goal of the Youth Action Plan is to ensure that King County's Strategic Plan objective to "promote opportunities for all communities and individuals to realize their full potential," is applied to the County's young people and reflected across all County departments, programs and initiatives. The plan also seeks to ensure that King County is a strong partner with the state, cities, private sector, non-profit and philanthropic organizations.

"The Youth Action Plan recognizes that youth really are our human potential, our future, as described in the King County Strategic Plan," said Mike Heinisch, Executive Director of Kent Youth and Family Services. "We all should be supportive of the King County Council's recognizing that potential can become reality by moving this Youth Action Plan forward."

"As a leader focused in moving the lives of young people forward on positive, productive and healthy paths I applaud Councilmember Dembowski's innovative approach," said YouthCare Executive Director Melinda Gioveno. "This effort will build on the work our community has done in developing a comprehensive plan for addressing youth and young adult homelessness, creating a vision for our community that puts our young people first and taking the first step towards an efficient, effective, outcome driven investment in the future of King County. Thank you."

"We are thrilled to see the development of a comprehensive plan for services and opportunities for young people in our region," said Jessica Werner, Executive Director of the Youth Development Executives of King County. "The time is right as we emerge out of the great recession to do something bigger and broader for our young people."

"As a former member of the King County Children and Families Commission, I am pleased to see King County leaders renewing their commitment to focusing on our community's children and youth," said State Representative Ruth Kagi, Chair of the House Early Learning and Human Services Committee. "The proposed legislation offers fresh hope for prioritization and investment in our kids."

"The success of our community is directly linked to the success of our kids," said King County Prosecutor Dan Satterberg. "This proposal will help coordinate multiple efforts designed to help young people grow up healthy, safe and smart."

"The Sheriff's Office is proud to participate in King County's Youth Action Plan," said King County Sheriff John Urquhart. "Devoting more attention and resources to our youth will pay dividends in the long run by helping them to succeed and keeping kids out of the criminal justice system."

“Providing children and young adults in King County with the tools they need to grow and thrive is not only the right thing to do, but is essential to the welfare of our community as a whole,” said retired Washington state Supreme Court Justice Bobbe Bridge, President of the Center for Children and Youth Justice. “The Youth Action Plan will provide a collaborative unified approach to providing services and support so all our young people will have an equal opportunity to reach their full potential.”

The adopted legislation calls for the creation of a broadly-based task force to develop a Youth Action Plan that would include the following elements:

- Mission, vision, and defined outcomes that enable the County to advance its Strategic Plan and social justice and equity goals as they relate to youth,
- A Bill of Rights for Youth,
- Whether a single point of accountability should be established to lead the County’s children and youth services, programs and policies, and if so, it’s form, role and duties,
- Identification of reform efforts and efficiencies, gaps, opportunities to take programs to scale, and recommendations to overcoming barriers to success,
- Prioritization of programs and methodologies and recommendations related to funding,
- Evaluation and reporting structure and implementation timeline.

The proposal calls on the County Executive to appoint members to a Youth Action Plan Task Force. The members of the task force would include elected officials, leaders from Seattle and suburban cities, and non-profit community partners that serve infants, children, youth and young adults. It would be charged with conducting information meetings with community members, stakeholders and consumers to keep interested parties informed on the development of the Plan.

The Youth Action Task Force is charged with preparing a Youth Action Plan for the King County Council by the spring of 2015.

###



King County

## Metropolitan King County Council

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February 24, 2014

### County Council adopts Socially Responsible Banking Law

**Unanimous support for requiring institutions to serve their communities as a minimum requirement for doing business with the County**

The Metropolitan King County Council wants financial institutions interested in a banking contract with King County to act in a socially responsible manner toward their customers, rather than having the sole duty of earning a profit for their shareholders.

The Council gave its unanimous support to legislation sponsored by Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee Chair Rod Dembowski and Council Vice Chair Joe McDermott which aims to ensure that King County's primary financial institutions meet their obligations of serving the credit and financial needs of all communities.

"Socially responsible banking" means the institutions must demonstrate their commitment to providing lending, investing and community banking services (such as access to loans, check cashing, and the ability to make deposits) to traditionally underserved and disadvantaged communities.

To do this, the ordinance adds a new component to the minimum requirements and formula used by King County to select a bank for the County's financial services.

"I have made a commitment to the people of King County, that I will use every tool, deploy every proven strategy -- as well as try new ones -- and leverage all resources of this powerful government to combat poverty in King County, and this ordinance will be a powerful new tool in this fight," said Councilmember Dembowski. "This proposal reflects the idea that banks aren't accountable solely to their shareholders, but also have an obligation to provide fair and equal service to all members of the communities that they do business in, regardless of race, ethnicity, income or other characteristics."

"This ordinance is a unique way to encourage financial institutions to meet the banking needs of all of our community—not just those with more cash," said Councilmember McDermott, the chair of the Council's Budget Committee. "This is a step forward in our work to ensure that all residents of King County have equal access to opportunity."

Under the adopted legislation, banks responding to the County's Request for Proposal (RFP) for financial services must hold a rating of "outstanding" under the Federal Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), which

encourages financial institutions such as banks and credit unions to better meet the financial needs of the communities in which they operate.

The institution must also submit a Community Reinvestment Plan (CRP), which specifically addresses the bank's activities within the County in regards to the institution's investment in King County communities, their lending practices with specific emphasis on loans made to small business and low income individuals, and the level of service they provide to meet the needs of low income and minority populations. Their rating under the CRA uses an existing federal system that evaluates a bank's performance in meeting the credit needs of its community.

"Communities in King County are struggling due to diminished access to capital," said Marcy Bowers, Executive Director, of the Statewide Poverty Action Network. "Hard economic times have pushed many of us deeply into debt, plunging us into a world filled with payday lenders, relentless collection agents, aggressive lawyers and companies that profit mightily if they can get people to pay up. By requiring banks to adhere to a community reinvestment plan that is tailored to the needs of our residents, King County is doing the early spade work to build a foundation for change."

"My family is in danger of losing our home. We are not alone in feeling the effects of the Recession," said High Point resident Joelle Craft. "I applaud King County for recognizing the continued struggles of some of its residents and for pushing the banks to mitigate the problems they are largely responsible for causing."

**Read more about this legislation on the King County Council's LEGISEARCH system at <http://mkcclegisearch.kingcounty.gov> and type in "2014-0031"**

###



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February 6, 2014

### King County Council starts work on “Living Wage” policy

**Councilmember Dembowski sponsors legislation calling for establishment of a living wage policy for King County employees and County contractors**

Metropolitan King County Councilmember Rod Dembowski, Chair of the Council’s Transportation, Economy and Environment (TrEE) Committee, has authored and introduced a motion this week proposing a living wage policy for King County.

“I am committed to using every tool, deploying every proven strategy -- as well as trying new ones -- and leveraging all resources of this powerful government to combat poverty in King County,” said Dembowski. “We must clear away the hurdles between our residents and the promise of America, and a good-paying job is the best means to that end. This living wage policy will help many residents rise out of the ranks of the working poor and cross the threshold of the American Dream.”

Motion 2014-0058 proposes that the County Council adopt a policy “that a living wage should be paid to county employees and to the employees of persons, businesses, organizations and other entities that receive procurement contracts, tax exemptions or credits or other financial or programmatic benefits from King County.”

“King County’s Strategic Plan includes a commitment to Equity and Social Justice,” said **Council Chair Larry Phillips**, a co-sponsor of the legislation. “This proposal is putting that commitment into action by asking those who contract with the County to pay their employees a wage that will allow them to live and thrive in this County.”

“I am eager to take on a justice issue of our time. Hard working King County residents who continue to struggle to make ends meet deserve better,” said **Council Vice Chair Joe McDermott**, who chairs the Budget and Fiscal Management Committee.

Under the motion, the Council would direct the County Executive prepare a report and present to the Council legislation to carry out the living wage policy no later than Labor Day, September 1, 2014. The report and legislation would address the benefits of setting a minimum level of compensation, exemptions to consider, fiscal impact, and whether the County should set a minimum wage for unincorporated King County and at the King County International Airport.

Fifty years after President Johnson declared war on poverty, many King County residents continue to struggle to make ends meet. According to the United States Department of Labor, women and people of color are disproportionately impacted by stagnate wages and the rising cost of meeting basic needs.

The current minimum wage for the State of Washington of \$9.32 per hour is 42 percent less than a living wage (wages sufficient to meet a family's basic needs without public assistance, and provide for some ability to meet emergencies) for a single adult and 58 percent less than a living wage for a single adult with a school-age child according to a December 2013 report by the Alliance for a Just Society. In its self-sufficiency standard for Washington State (2011), the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County reported that Washington State's minimum wage is insufficient to meet the basic needs of working families.

"Working people across King County have been left behind by employers that fail to keep the promise that a day's work will lead to success," said **SEIU Healthcare 775NW President David Rolf**. "When government lifts wages to a living wage, everyone benefits. Workers are able to feed their families, pay rent and save; and local businesses make more because the workers have money to spend. That's why SEIU members across the state and around the country are supporting these kinds of living wage efforts and we applaud Councilmember Dembowski for his leadership in introducing this legislation."

"Income inequality is a primary factor in the destruction of the American middle class," said **David Freiboth, Executive Secretary of M.L. King County Labor Council**. "Actions like this not only contribute to addressing this threat but also raise the general awareness that an out of control market economy is robbing future generations of a fair chance to live the American dream."

The 2014 work program for the Transportation, Economy & Environment Committee prioritizes advancing policies that combat poverty in King County. This legislation represents one step in that policy agenda. The TrEE committee will hold hearings, take public input, and work with Executive Constantine to finalize and implement the proposed living wage policy in the coming months.

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